

Rumors

Project 3 Report

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Animation & Film Design (2009-11)

IDC, IIT Bombay.

Project Guide:

Prof. Phani Tetali

Declaration sheet

I declare that this written submission represents my idea in my own words and where other's idea or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. I also declare that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or fabricated or falsified any idea/data/fact/source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the institute and can also evoke penal action from the sources which have thus not been properly cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.

Signature *Naween.*

Name of the student *Naween Kiran*

Roll No. *09634007*

Date *31st May 2011*

Approval sheet

The Project III titled "Rumors" by Naveen Kiran is approved in Partial fulfillment of the requirement for M.Des. Degree In Animation & Film Design.

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Acknowledgement

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Abstract

'Rumors' is a short film showing how rumors spread among people and make an impact on their lives. My attempt in this project was to explore character animation, expressions, and to put forward a serious story in a humorous manner. A person encounters a small but strange beast in a jungle. He tells his fellows about the incident. Now the story starts spreading and people keep on making their own version of it by adding some more information about the beast. The Story illustrates how the spreading rumor affects the life of the common man and his environment.

Introduction

Rumors are associated with human civilization for ages. It is the most primitive way of spreading news or stories by passing them from mouth to mouth. It is a statement about an object, person, event, or issue in public concern, circulating from person to person, of which veracity is not confirmed. Rumors are the reflection of public desire, fear and fantasies and strongly dependent upon people's belief.

Rumors are always there around us and consciously or unconsciously, we get involved in them. It creates stress, confusion, amusement, depending upon its content and context. Some rumors die very soon but some of them make a strong impact on society, or on people's life. These rumors make people to react in a particular fashion and thus lead to start some interesting chain of events.

In my project I wish to explore serious situations created due to rumors and tell these stories in a humorous way.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this project is to create a story by observing people in their day to day life and to illustrate a short film based on the unnecessary complexities created by human mind. Rumor is a subject which I found very common and familiar to all. In addition to make a good film my objectives of doing this project are to present a serious situation in a humorous way and to focus on character animation and especially on expressions.

Inspiration and Motivation.

Basic inspiration behind the project is day to day life where people make up their own stories about their surroundings. These stories are both positive and negative, depending upon public emotions. Positive stories or rumors lead to hope, confidence, happiness, and development, while negative rumors create chaos, disbelief, depression, and destruction. We all must have witnessed so many such incidents in our daily life when word to mouth is a great way of sharing news but where rumors have very often lead to problems. How context starts disappearing as news starts spreading and people at the end of the pyramid get only out of context bits and pieces. This happens even today when media and Internet are all around us, we often get out of context news that directly affect us.

We see what we want to see, our frame of mind shapes our thoughts and thus these 'out of context' news take different forms and interesting angles are added to them because no two individuals think same.

Motivation behind this project was to bring forth this subconscious aspect of human psyche that how unknowingly we become part of such news and stories and help them reach to other minds that shape it as they like and want to see it.

Background Study

What is rumor?

Robert Knapp states in his book 'Psychology of Rumor' that a proposition for belief of topical reference disseminated without official verification. So formidably defined, rumor is but a special case of informal social communications, including myth, legend, and current humor. He describes the various characteristics of rumor:

1. They travel from mouth to ear.
2. They live on public belief.
3. They provide information about a person, object, event or condition of which veracity is not confirmed.
4. They express emotional need of the community.

Knapp further divides rumors into following categories.

"Pipe dream" or wish-fulfillment rumors these express the wishes and hopes of those who circulate them.

"Bogie" or anxiety rumors, these express the fears of those who circulate them.

"Wedge-driving" or divisive rumors are motivated by aggression, prejudice, or hatred on the part of those circulating them.

In times of stress and confusion, rumor emerges and widespread. Even people who don't believe in it often help in circulating it unknowingly. Pessimistic rumors show that the people who repeat them are worried and anxious. Optimistic rumors bring about confidence, and often overconfidence.



A still from Film 2012, based on a rumor.



Unverified image of an UFO.

It is a misconception that rumors are like snowball means they keep growing as they spread out. It depends on public interest. People repeat only those facts in which they are interested in, rest of the details are forgotten. Generally one gets some unverified facts or statements on which one builds one's opinion. This opinion becomes fact for others and they develop their opinion based upon it, and the chain goes on.

There are some famous rumors which are always a hot topic to discuss. Rumors about natural disasters which will lead to end of the world, sighting of unknown flying objects, ghosts and spirits, politics, celebrities, are very common.

Some Existing Stories



A still from Dronacharya Vadha (Mahabharat)

1. 'The Boy Who Broke the Bank' by Ruskin Bond: It is a story started from a loose talking which in the end creates a problematic situation for the subject of rumor. It is about the instant reaction of people to the news without cross checking or verifying the news.
2. The Hare That Ran Away (a folktale): In this story an event is misunderstood and this leads to panic in the whole jungle.
3. Dronacharya Vadha (Mahabharata): An intentionally spread half truth to demoralize the target.

Story Development

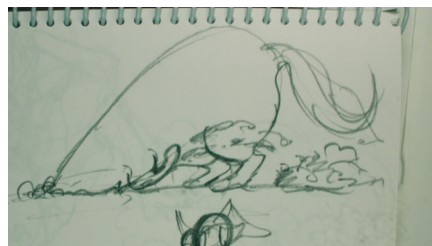
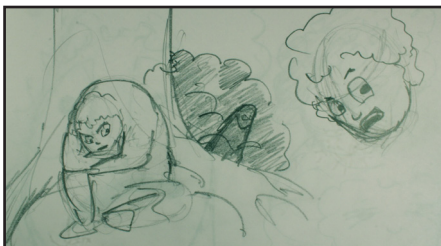
The basic concept was to visualize public imagination. It started with an initial idea of an animal which turns into a monster as a public imagination. A person gets scared of shadow of an unknown creature. He describes about the shadow to his friend who imagines about the animal itself.

They tell the story to other fellows and their imagination also makes changes in the appearance of that animal. In a very short time story gets spread all over the village and the animal turns to a monster. People get scared and run out of the jungle.

I didn't have an end to the story. While discussing with various people a common suggestion was to reveal the unknown animal to be a small tiny creature like rabbit or squirrel in the end. This would be the most obvious ending for the film. So I decided to reveal this secret in the starting of the film. But what about the end?

Here are a few versions I tried as an ending to the story:

1. All are scared of the imaginary monster and are running out of the jungle. Even the small creature from which the rumor started comes to know about it and starts running. This also seems very obvious and predictable story.
2. The small creature comes to know about the rumor and is aware that people have created his wrong image. Now it tries to correct its wrong image. But why does it need to do it? There is no necessity.

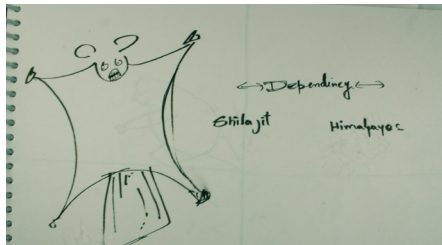
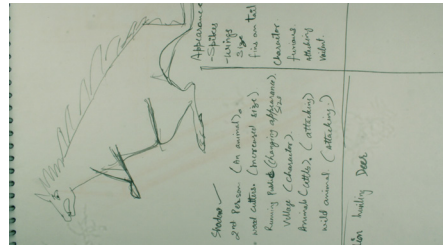
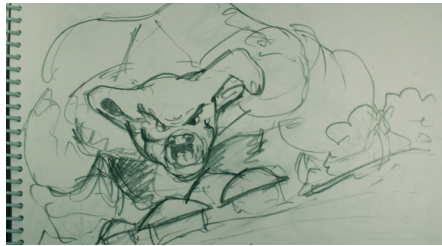
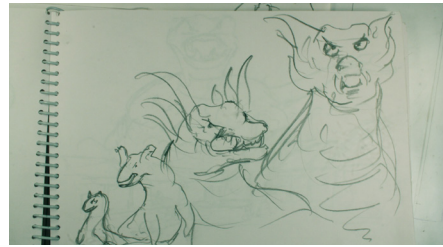
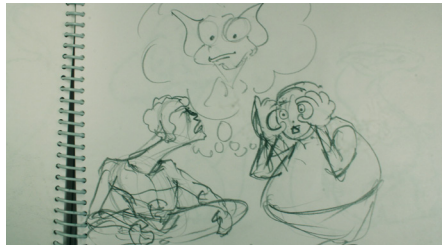


3. Another version of the story consisted of flying squirrels in the Himalayas whose small house use to get filled with a Rasayana called Shilajit. Now as Shilajit is being used by humans for medicinal purpose, and often gets taken from the squirrel's house. Hence the house also gets cleaned. Now the humans are scared of the imaginary monster and left collecting shilajit. The squirrel needs to clean its house so it tries to convince humans that the monster is not in real.

This version of story is too complicated and lengthy not suitable for a short film.

Suddenly I realized that there is lot of possibilities with the imaginary monster also. What if the monster is in reality? What impact is rumor making on him? What if there are bigger and dangerous creatures of which the monster is also scared. What if those giant creatures are also victims of the rumor and get scared of the imaginary monster. Thinking upon all these possibilities I finalized the story.

Concept Development



Final Story

One fine evening in a deep Jungle some people from village are collecting food, wood and other necessary things for living. One of them is in search of mushrooms and he finds them in the middle of the grass. He is about to collect them, suddenly some noise from the jungle scares him. But he is more interested in the mushrooms. He starts collecting them in his bag. Again some noise comes from jungle. Now he is really scared. He starts collecting mushrooms as fast as he can. And then, he sees something. His eyes are wide open. There is a shadow falling on the rock in front him. The shadow appears to be of a dragon like character but nothing is clear. The person gets frightened, and runs away from there. The shadow is actually of a small squirrel which is stuck in the bush and making a shadow of a dragon.

Another guy is plucking fruits. The first guy comes shouting and running. He tells him about the shadow, how it was looking. Listening to his description the second guy imagines the animal to which that shadow could belong. Both of them are scared and start running.

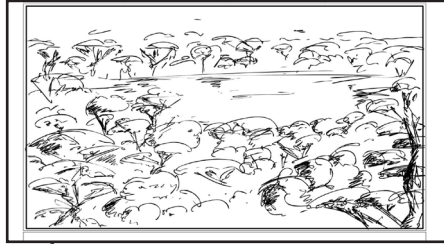
Few people are cutting and collecting wood. The first two guys reach there and tell their experience. They tell about the shadow, the animal, how it looked, how big it was, and how scary it was. On their description the woodcutters imagine a huge dragon kind of creature. Everyone gets scared and starts running. Now the news spread among many people and so that imaginary creature is developing. Now it is a giant dragon taller than the trees. Its body is full of spikes and scales and has two huge wings.

People reach their village. Now the number of mouths and ears has increased and so the story of the dragon is developing. Now someone has seen the dragon in front of him, it attacked someone and its coming to destroy the whole village.

All the villagers are frightened and are running out of the village. Seeing this the animals of the village also start running out of fear. The news is spread in the whole jungle. All the animals of the jungle also are trying to escape. Even the lion, bear, elephant is also running. At the edge of the jungle, there is deep silence. Suddenly people are running out of it shouting and almost attempting to save their lives. Following them the herd of cow, bulls, deer, bear, lion elephant are running, making a huge noise. A cloud of dust is rising up from the ground. After a while, all are disappeared. A deep silence is in the atmosphere. Dust is slowly setting down.

Suddenly the earth starts vibrating. There is some disturbance in the trees. Trees start shaking. A huge dinosaur is coming out of the jungle, crushing trees and bushes. It looks scared. Following him another dinosaur appears, then another and another. All are scared and running out of the jungle. And in between them there is a dragon. It is the same dragon which people developed in their imagination and got scared. But here the dragon itself is scared. It is running out of fear as someone is coming and about to finish his life.

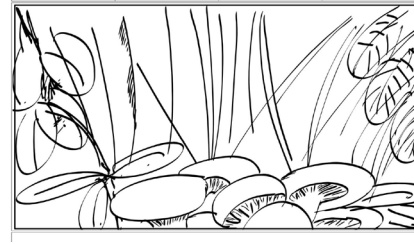
Story Board



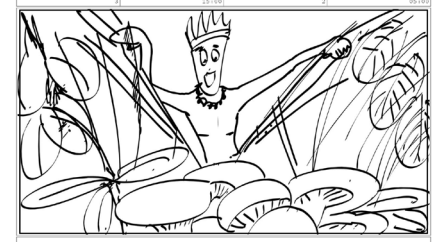
A jungle scene, over view



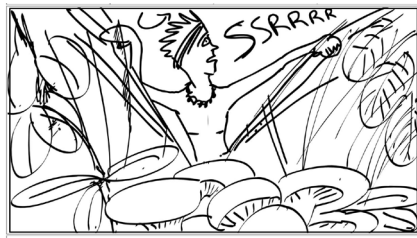
Panning to the bottom of a tree



Mushrooms



A guy appears from behind the grass.
Looking for mushrooms



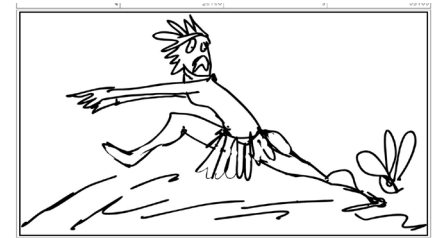
A scary noise from the deep forest. Guy gets scared.



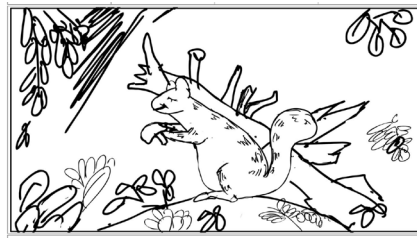
He looks ahead. A shadow on the rock.



The guy gets frightened ...



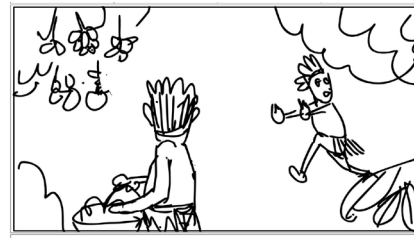
And runs away



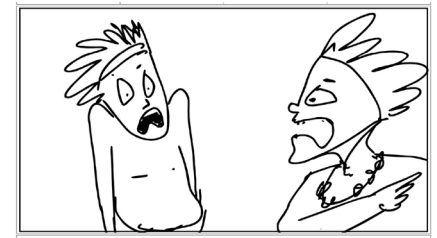
Shadow is of a squirrel.



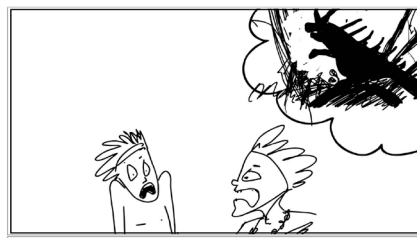
Another guy plucking fruits



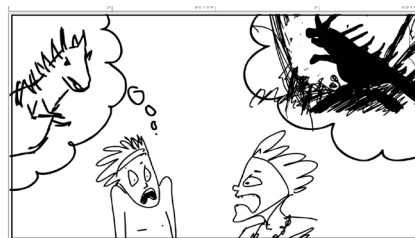
First guy comes shouting



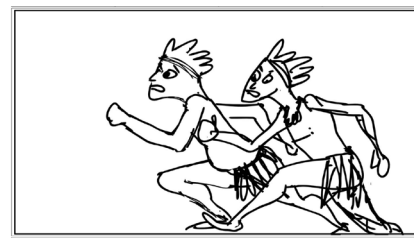
Tells about what he saw...



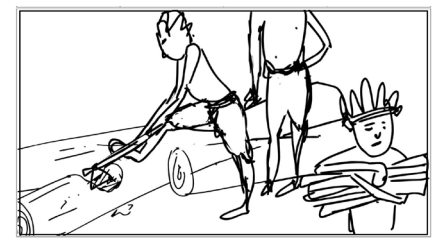
A shadow of a scary animal....



Second guy imagines the animal



Both get scared and run away.



Some people cutting wood at some distance

Story Board



The two guys reach them...



And explain about the animal



Wood cutters increase the size of animal in their imagination.



People start running....



More people join the crowd, more the animal changes its appearance



Now its a huge dragon



People reach their village



Villagers are busy with their routine life



People from the jungle reach and ...



Tell the stories of the dragon. Someone saw the dragon



It attacked on them...



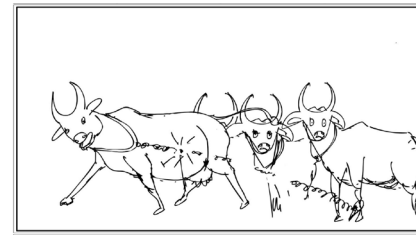
And its coming to destroy the village.



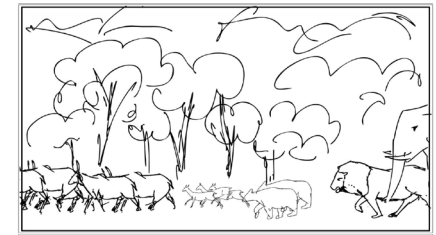
People leave their village and run away



Animals are watching the whole situation



And they also run away

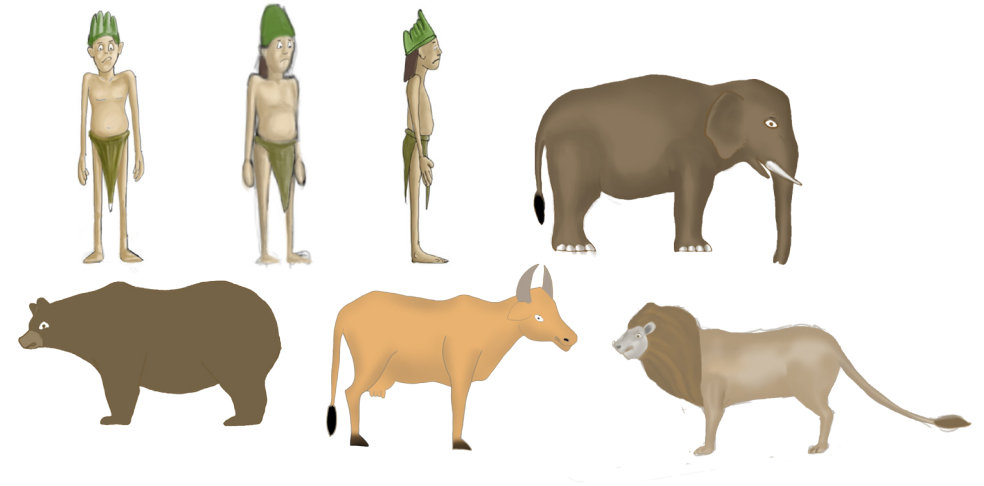


Animals from the jungle also join them. All 19 are scared.

Explorations



Character Design & Conceptual Layout



Conceptual layouts for jungle



Production, Post Production

Once the story was finalized and story board was developed, I lined up the story board on a time line and prepared a rough animatic.

The biggest challenges in the process of Production and Post Production were:

- To get smooth movement and motion in the characters,
- To achieve expressions and acting in the characters.

I chose paperless animation method by using Adobe Flash software. Through this software I could get quick preview of the animation and also saved a lot of time of line testing and scanning the drawings.

Back grounds were created in Photoshop and composited with the characters in After Effects.

Finally the film was edited in Adobe Premiere along with the sound track.

Conclusion

Watching a film is completely an entertainment business, occasionally we learn things from movies that last for short and long term, depending upon the simplicity of the message. However making a movie is not just about entertainment, it has more to do with creation. Creating images, sounds, scenes, stories and bringing them to life by putting them together and that's what completes a movie. The process of making this film enabled me to understand my strength and weaknesses in a much better way, not to mention that my confidence has scaled new heights. Having gone through the process of making a film, I can now see films with a new perspective hitherto not experienced.

The kind of film that I ventured to make at the outset was very ambitious. Initially, achieving intended style of visuals became difficult so I adopted an alternative style that was practically achievable. And one thing that this movie has given to me is curiosity; it has made me curious to dig more and deep into the world of animation. Overall it was a good learning.

References

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